

Message Text

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11
ACTION AF-08

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
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STATE FOR AF/W AND SCA/SCS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, PINS, PFOR, NI
SUBJ: TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS IN NIGERIA

REF: LAGOS A-129 9/30/76, SUBJ: XENOPHOBIA AND NIGERIA

1. AMCIT STUDENT ON STUDY TOUR AT UNIV OF IBADAN RECENTLY BECAME FOURTH AMCIT KNOWN TO US TO HAVE HAD CAMERA AND FILM TAKEN FROM HIM WHILE PHOTOGRAPHING AT LARGE. HIS IS THE FIRST INSTANCE WITH CLEARLY IDENTIFIED POLICE INVOLVEMENT BY THE SECURITY SECTION. PERSONAL CONTACTS BY CONOFF WITH OYO STATE POLICE COMMISSIONER WHO THEN CONTACTED SMG AND HEAD OF SECURITY HERE RESULTED IN DIRECT RELEASE OF CAMERA AND FILM TO AMCIT AND ASSURANCE THAT "THERE IS NO LAW OR POLICY PROHIBITING TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS HERE".

2. PREVIOUS CASES ALSO INVOLVED RETURN OF CAMERA BUT IN TWO CASES FILM WAS REPORTEDLY RETAINED. HOWEVER, NO IDENTIFICATION OF THOSE CONFISCATING FILM WAS GIVEN. ONE FELLOW PURPORTED TO BE POLICEMAN BUT WOULD NOT SHOW ID. CIRCUMSTANCES AND INCOMPLETE AND INDIRECT NATURE OF REPORTS TO CONOFF PRECLUDED FOLLOW-UP WHICH WAS AFFORDED IN THIS MOST RECENT CASE BY AMCIT'S INSISTENCE ON ID AND RECEIPTS

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FOR CAMERA AND LENS TAKEN.

3. OFFICIAL SEIZING CAMERA IN LATEST CASE WAS POLITE BUT INSISTENT ON CONFISCATION. WHEN PRESSED FOR CITATION OF LAW VIOLATED, OFFICIAL OFFERED THAT AMCIT SHOULD NOT PHOTOGRAPH "INDUSTRIAL ACTION". AMCIT HAD WANDERED ONTO CAXTON PRESS WORKERS MILLING AROUND OUTSIDE GATE AFTER LATEST LOCK-OUT. AMCIT WAS NEWLY ARRIVED IN COUNTRY BUT HAD BEEN BRIEFED ABOUT POSSIBLE SENSITIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH PHOTOGRAPHY. AS A BLACK AMERICAN HE WAS NOT AS EASILY IDENTIFIABLE AS FOREIGN AS WERE THREE WHITE AMCITS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN SUCH INCIDENTS.

4. FYI: BESIDES CAXTON PRESS INCIDENT, ONE INCIDENT INVOLVED PHOTOGRAPHING A DANFO (VW BUS USED FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT) AND ONE A BILLBOARD AND ONE WAS A BONVOYAGE PHOTO AT MURTALLA MOHAMMED AIRPORT.

5. CONOFFS WILL CONTINUE TO BRIEF ALL AMCITS WHO REGISTER ABOUT SENSITIVITY OF PHOTOGRAPHING AND WILL KEEP EMBASSY AND DEPT INFORMED OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AS FESTAC APPROACHES.
HOYT

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